

# California State Journal of Medicine.

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Medical Society of the State of California

Members of the Society are requested to promptly notify the publication office of change of address, in order that mailing list may be corrected. Secretaries of County Societies are also requested to notify the "Journal" of deaths, removals, etc., and send in names of new members and their postoffice address.

Communications on subjects of interest to the profession are invited. The "Journal" is not responsible for the views advanced by correspondents. Address letters relating to the "Journal" to the publication office, 31 Post Street, San Francisco.

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## EDITORIAL NOTES.

The JOURNAL is under obligations to the *Occidental Medical Times* and begs to acknowledge that fact. It had feared that its little paragraph about "Scientific Editorials" had been wholly overlooked, and was to be quite forgotten, when the *Times*, in its July number, was good enough to revert to the matter.

Now, the Publication Committee, which has the task of editing the JOURNAL, is made up of men from the ranks of the Society; they have had no special training in medical journalism, and they have read very carefully what the editors of the *Times* have seen fit to say; but they do not quite see just why the *Times* spoke as it did. Why did the *Times* think the JOURNAL was intending to turn to "personal or partisan" matters? Had the JOURNAL said so? Had the JOURNAL done it without saying so? Will the *Times* answer? Will the *Times* continue the really kind office it has begun and tell the JOURNAL exactly how it has erred, or proposed to err in these particular matters? If the JOURNAL has erred, it is ignorant of it; it has no more intention of opening its editorial pages to controversial matters than it has of opening its advertising pages to charlatanry. It has a very high idea of its duties to the Society, and it intends to deal "with the present, the living, the actual status of questions that are before us. It is the essence, concentrated and condensed," of all matters that affect the Society, or that portion of the profession outside the Society that the JOURNAL intends to discuss and is discussing. It may sometimes have to refer to men—for the Society is made up of them; it may even refer to them by name, but it never intends to do this as the representative of a party or a faction. "Subjects germane to the government, and improvement of the Society," shall

have full presentation, but always in a way dignified by the absence of controversy—the JOURNAL is above controversy.

Because of this last fact the JOURNAL forgives the *Times* for quoting twice its statement that some work could not be done unless remuneration were offered. The JOURNAL knows that fact, and tells it to the *Times*. Men will work out the scientific problems of subjects in which they are specially interested, but the work is part of their treatment of the whole subject, and the credit is theirs. Men will not do that work in an impersonal manner, as in the editorial pages of a journal. Surely the *Times* knows this. Finally, the JOURNAL begs that the *Times* will continue its kindly and welcome criticism, promising that the Publication Committee will respect the wider experience and riper judgment of its seniors; but the JOURNAL is debarred, by its position, from offering to perform a similar office for the *Times*.

Article VI, Section 3, of the By-Laws of the State Society reads: "The Committee on Publication shall consist of five members. It shall supervise all the publications of this Society, and it shall have full power to determine what papers, or portions of papers, shall appear in the printed transactions (JOURNAL). No paper that has appeared in print, or has been read before any medical association prior to its presentation to this Society, shall be published in the transactions (JOURNAL)." While the letter of the law does not explicitly state that papers read before the State Society at its annual meeting pass out of the control of their authors, the spirit of the law, unquestionably, favors that disposition, giving the Publication Committee the option, and imposing upon it the obligation of selection of such papers as it may choose to print. A number of papers read at Santa Barbara have appeared in other publications without the consent of the Publication Committee, or have been read before county society meetings. This action on the part of authors is, to say the least, scarcely treating the committee with the courtesy it has a right to expect. From the viewpoint of the publisher, additional value is given a first publication, similar to the value given by the lay press to an "exclusive story." Members of the State Society should have enough pride in their own JOURNAL to give it the option on their papers. No magazine or periodical prefers to fill its pages with matter which any considerable number of its readers has seen before; and while it may be entirely proper and commendable to give a carefully prepared treatise as much dissemination as possible, at the same time the start should be made in the "home paper." In case an author wishes to have his article published in a journal

devoted to a particular branch of medical science, or in one having a larger circulation than the *STATE JOURNAL*, an arrangement may be made by which the article can be published simultaneously in the two periodicals.

Elsewhere in the *JOURNAL* will be found an account of the recent meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association. It is well within the truth to say that **RELIEF IN SIGHT.** practically the only questions discussed very generally were the need and desirability of dealing with the evils recognized in lack of uniformity of standard, and too frequent adulteration and impurity of medicines, and how a more friendly feeling between physician and pharmacist might be brought about. In regard to the former topic, it appears that the very moderate resolutions reported by the committee on a proposed National Bureau of Medicines and Foods were accepted and endorsed, practically unanimously. There seems to have been large difference of opinion as to whether the general plan suggested by the committee (published in the July *JOURNAL*) was the best possible plan. It is but natural that any question of such great importance should be a matter of much discussion, and the more discussion this question receives, the better; for out of much discussion may come some needed relief. That a modification of the plan mentioned, introducing such features as it has been shown are necessary, will be adopted before long, now seems reasonably sure. It seems to be conceded that things are growing worse and that eventually the correction will come in a manner not altogether desirable unless the move toward correction has its inception with those most interested in having it properly done.

When reports such as that presented by Mr. Beringer to the American Pharmaceutical Association, on analysis of phenacetin, are brought to the attention of the physician, he certainly can not be blamed for a feeling of distrust. He learns that at least one pharmacist out of 182 was guilty of filling a prescription calling for ten grains of phenacetin with twenty grains of acetanilid. How many others are equally careless and dishonest? We know that there are not many, but we also know there are some. Shall the physician specify some pharmacy where his prescription is to be filled and thus lay himself open to the charge of improperly receiving a commission from the druggist, or shall he do his own dispensing? These questions were brought up not once, but many times, at the meeting of the Pharmaceutical Association, and it was evident that the great mass of pharmacists

desire to see the line drawn between the dishonest and careless, and the honest and careful. When all interested are agreed upon the need for and the desire for some particular undertaking, it would seem scarcely possible to prevent such action. Most pharmacists are neither careless nor dishonest, but the few who are permitted to be so injure the many who are not. It is the many who are straight who will have to combine in the correction of the few who are not and who bring discredit upon all.

An admirable idea seems to have been born into the world by the New Castle County Medical Society of Delaware. It is no less than a plan for presenting things medical to the public in a truly ethical and professional manner. Statements which it may be desired to have placed before the public in the lay press are to be prepared and signed by a "press committee," and thus the personal advertising of the author prevented. It seems to the *JOURNAL* that such a plan has everything to commend it and little or nothing to be urged against it. To be sure, some one individual will have to do the writing for the proposed committee, but it is highly probable that in most cases the individual will be willing to sink his identity in an impersonal committee, that the result may be to the public good. Without effort one can think of many questions which it is highly desirable that the public should be enlightened upon, yet which a physician of standing would not care to publish over his signature for reasons well recognized. By all means let us have press committees of our medical societies.

There are but few county medical societies in the State unaffiliated with the State Society, and their reason for staying outside **WORK FOR EVERY MEMBER.** is very difficult to understand. No argument is required to prove the advantages of a strong State Society; its power for doing good and its undeniable influence in shaping important measures for the advantage and protection of members of the profession, are self-evident. It must therefore be presumed they are unaffiliated simply through a lack of energy, or, mayhap, a lack of harmony in their ranks; and just here is where members of the State Society may find a field for some desirable missionary work. Besides the unaffiliated county societies there are a few counties entirely unorganized, in some of which this inaction is quite inexcusable. The Board of Trustees has divided the work of infusing some life into these dormant localities, acting as counsellors each trustee having a certain section as-